

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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January 17, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director
Department of Public Social Services

Marvin Southard, Director
Department of Mental Health

Bruce A. Chernof, Acting Director
Department of Health Services

David Sanders, Director
Department of Children and Family Services

Board of Supervisors

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SUBJECT: COUNTY SERVICES TO HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ON SKID ROW

This is a follow-up to our November 17, 2005, memo to your Board, entitled "County Services to Homeless Individuals on Skid Row," in which we responded to articles in the Los Angeles Times that gave attention to the need for additional services for this population. In that memo, we committed to provide a report to your Board within 60 days on the results of feasibility studies and cost analyses on each of the specific recommendations to further enhance services to the homeless adults on Skid Row.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Departments and partners collaborated in the development of potential new and enhanced services to further address the needs of homeless adults on Skid Row. The following provides a brief description of each recommendation and corresponding cost. More detailed information may be found in the Attachments.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

The recommendations have been categorized as:

- I. Board Action would be required for implementation—to be included in the multi-departmental February 28, 2006 Board Letter which is being developed by the CAO in response to the December 20, 2005 Board Motion;
- II. Board action would be required for implementation—not included in the December 20, 2005 Board Motion;
- III. Implementation without further Board action;
- IV. Recommendation withdrawn.

Each Department will separately provide any future follow-up Board letters with recommended actions or reports to your Board as necessary, unless such follow-up recommendations or reports are otherwise included in Board letters or reports coordinated and submitted by the CAO.

I. **BOARD ACTION WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION—TO BE INCLUDED IN CAO'S MULTI-DEPARTMENTAL FEBRUARY 28, 2006 BOARD LETTER**

Public Social Services (DPSS)

General Relief Housing Subsidy and Case Management Pilot Proposal

The General Relief (GR) Housing Subsidy and Case Management Pilot Proposal is modeled after San Francisco's "Care Not Cash" (CNC) program. The proposal provides for a voluntary pilot project to assist homeless GR participants in obtaining housing, case management and supportive services. The projected one-year cost of the pilot is \$4,200,000 Net County Cost for approximately 1300 participants; however, the amount of each rental subsidy and the resulting number of participants is still under consideration. (Attachment A)

DPSS/Sheriff Homeless Release Project

DPSS, in collaboration with the Sheriff and Mental Health Departments, would expand the existing Twin Towers project to add the Men's Central Jail. DPSS would take applications for all DPSS-administered programs from any potentially homeless inmate prior to release. Costs will be determined by mid-February 2006, following completion of a survey of homeless inmates currently being conducted by the Sheriff's Department. (Attachment B)

Sheriff

The Sheriff, in conjunction with the Discharge Policies Workgroup led by the Chief Administrative Officer, proposes to create stabilization centers, as well as mobile outreach teams, to serve both post-release inmates and homeless persons arrested for minor offenses who have mental health and/or substance abuse issues.

Specifically, the stabilization centers would be strategically located throughout the County to be used by law enforcement as an alternative to booking homeless persons with mental illness and/or substance abuse who are arrested for minor offenses and who are in need of service connections. In addition, the stabilization centers would serve persons who are being discharged from County jails and have no identified place to go. Mental health, substance abuse, social services, and economic support services would be provided at the stabilization centers by teams of experts. Costs are being developed and will be presented in the February 28, 2006 Board letter. (Attachment C)

II. BOARD ACTION WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION – NOT INCLUDED IN DECEMBER 20, 2005 BOARD MOTION

Health Services (DHS)

Increase Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment

DHS will increase outpatient substance abuse treatment slots in the Skid Row area. Substance abuse treatment availability is continually in short supply with extensive wait times. The addition of 30 new outpatient treatment slots in the Skid Row area will enable approximately 100 individuals to enter and engage in treatment, advancing the potential for addressing their addiction and homelessness. The annual cost for these additional services is estimated at \$150,000. (Attachment D)

Health Services (DHS)/Mental Health (DMH)

DHS and DMH propose to provide a greater focus on dual diagnosis treatment services.

DHS proposes to add residential treatment beds in contracted Alcohol & Drug Program Administration (ADPA) Skid Row provider facilities with connectivity to DMH's Downtown Mental Health Center (DTMHC) for co-occurring treatment. DTMHC will continue to expand and enhance current co-occurring treatment available for persons living in the Skid Row area. The estimated annual cost is \$766,500. (Attachment E)

Mental Health (DMH)

DMH and DPSS propose to explore an expansion of current efforts to provide mental health treatment services and documentation to support SSI approvals.

Under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), DMH will enroll at least 50 chronically homeless individuals in the Full Service Partnership (FSP). The projected cost is approximately \$750,000 annually. (Attachment F)

Children and Family Services (DCFS)

DCFS proposes to procure emergency motel vouchers for emancipated foster youth.

DCFS continues to outreach to motel managers and discuss the benefits of accepting motel vouchers. An initial budget of \$5,000 has been identified for the vouchers and will be funded within the Department's Independent Living Program allocation. County costs have not yet been determined. (Attachment G)

III. IMPLEMENTATION WITHOUT FURTHER BOARD ACTION

Children and Family Services (DCFS)

DCFS is developing a proposal to promote legal permanency for older foster youth, since isolation plays a significant role in homelessness, especially with this population.

DCFS has initiated programs to safely return youth to their parents or to place more youth in legally permanent homes. The Department is increasing the use of Family Group Decision Making via the Permanency Programs Partners (P3) model by hiring retired staff to perform new searches for relatives that can take custody of the youth, and promoting adoption for other youth. DCFS is working with the CAO to identify ongoing funding. (Attachment H)

Community and Senior Services (DCSS)

DCSS proposes that law enforcement agencies use an elder abuse/neglect screening tool with homeless adults and initiate referrals to Outreach Teams for assessment, whenever elder abuse/neglect is suspected.

The budget for training and other costs for this proposal is still under development. (Attachment I)

Health Services (DHS)

Comprehensive Health Education Program

DHS will establish a comprehensive health education program for Skid Row homeless providers to increase health literacy, public health awareness and health promotion. There are no costs associated with implementation of this recommendation. (Attachment J)

IV. RECOMMENDATION WITHDRAWN

Public Social Services (DPSS)

Increase in Vendor Reimbursement Rate

In an effort to obtain additional emergency shelter beds and attract more participation in the vendor voucher program, DPSS proposed an increase in the reimbursement rate for vendors from the current \$24/per night. A dollar-for-dollar cost analysis resulted in a projected annual increase in Net County Cost between \$0.1 million (for an increase of one dollar per bed/night) and \$3.0 million (for an increase of \$26 per bed/night).

An increase in the reimbursement rate is not recommended at this time. Further study is needed following the evaluation of various current efforts to enhance the availability of emergency shelter. This recommendation will be revisited at a later date.

In conclusion, final cost estimates on the three recommendations which your Board endorsed in concept on December 20, 2005, will be incorporated into the CAO's multi-departmental February 28, 2006 Board Letter. The recommendations not included in the CAO's multi-departmental February 28, 2006 Board Letter, which would require your Board's approval prior to implementation, will be submitted separately by each respective Department for future action by your Board.

BY/MS/BC/DS:dk

Attachments

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Lee Baca, Sheriff
Interim Director, Community and Senior Services
Director, Community Development Commission
Director, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority